

## IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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SERIAL NO.: (International Appn No. PCT/EP03/04061)

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TITLE: BACKPACK ATTACHMENT FOR IMPROVED DISTRIBUTION OF THE  
BACKPACK WEIGHT ACROSS A USER'S SHOULDERS

Preliminary Amendment: CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently amended) A backpack attachment for use with backpacks that have a bag- like body-~~(CS)~~ and a pair of shoulder straps-~~(T)~~, in particular backpacks-~~(Z)~~ used by school attendants, being effective to distribute the backpack weight in a rationalized fashion across ~~the~~ a user's shoulders, ~~and characterized in that it comprises~~ said attachment comprising:

two curved members ~~(t)~~ arranged to stiffen substantially ~~the~~ sections of the shoulder straps ~~(T)~~ that lie closest to ~~the~~ an upper region of the bag-like body-~~(CS)~~.

2. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 1, further comprising:

two substantially inflexible curved members mounted in place ~~of the~~ at closest sections of the shoulder straps-~~(T)~~ to the upper region of the bag-like body-~~(CS)~~.

3. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 1, further comprising:

two substantially inflexible curved members associated with the closest sections of the shoulder straps-~~(T)~~ to the upper region of the bag-like body-~~(CS)~~.

4. (Currently amended) The attachment of ~~Claims 1 to 3~~, Claim 1, wherein said substantially inflexible curved members ~~(1)~~ have ~~their~~ an underside thereof lined with a soft yielding material ~~(3)~~.

5. (Currently amended) The attachment of ~~Claims 1 to 4~~, consisting of Claim 1, further comprisng:

a pair of substantially inflexible curved members ~~(1)~~, each ~~as~~ member having a one-piece construction ~~(2,2A)~~.

6. (Currently amended) The attachment of ~~Claims 1 to 4~~, Claim 1, further comprising:

a pair of substantially inflexible curved members ~~(1)~~, wherein ~~said~~ the curved members are ~~made up~~ comprised of several pieces ~~(6)~~ jointed to one another.

7. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 5, wherein ~~said~~ the curved members ~~(1)~~ are of hollow construction and ~~adapted to be slipped~~ slippable each over ~~one of~~ said shoulder straps ~~(T)~~.

8. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 5, wherein ~~said~~ the curved members ~~(1)~~ are hinge-ably connected to a holder ~~(4)~~, said holder being ~~adapted to be~~ affixed to the upper region of the bag-like body ~~(CS) of the backpack (Z)~~.

9. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 6, having wherein the curved members ~~(1)~~ ~~made up~~ are comprised of hollow pieces ~~adapted to be slipped~~ slippable over said shoulder straps ~~(T)~~.

10. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 6, wherein ~~the~~ leading ~~one (7) of said~~ hinge-connected pieces ~~(6)~~ in each curved member ~~(1) can be~~ is affixed to the upper region of the bag-like body ~~(CS) of the backpack (Z)~~, with ~~the~~ a trailing ~~one~~ hinge-connected piece carrying the shoulder strap ~~(F)~~ fastened thereto.

11. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 6, wherein ~~the~~ a leading ~~one (9) of said~~ hinge-connected pieces ~~(6)~~ in each curved member ~~(1) can be~~ is affixed to the upper region of the bag-like body ~~(CS) of the backpack (Z)~~, with the shoulder strap ~~(F)~~ extending from ~~said~~ the leading piece ~~(9)~~ through ~~the~~ other pieces ~~(6)~~ connected thereto.

12. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 6, wherein the curved members ~~(1)~~ are ~~made up~~ comprised of several shaped pieces ~~(11)~~, each adapted to be associated with the shoulder straps ~~(F)~~ in a detachable manner, at least one ~~(14)~~ in a lockable manner.

13. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 12, wherein ~~said~~ the leading pieces ~~(11)~~ of ~~said~~ the curved members ~~(1) can be~~ is associated with the shoulder straps by ~~means of~~ releasable hoops ~~(12)~~, ~~the other~~ another piece ~~(14)~~ being associated with the shoulder straps by ~~means of~~ a releasable camlock device ~~(15,16,17)~~.

14. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 12, wherein further comprising:  
a locking arrangement ~~(19,20) intervenes~~ intervening between ~~the~~ jointed pieces ~~(11)~~ of each curved member for maintaining a set angle between individual ~~ones of said~~ pieces.

15. (Currently amended) The attachment of ~~Claims 12 and 13~~, ~~WHEREIN~~ said Claim 12, wherein a set angle between individual jointed pieces ~~(11)~~ of each curved member ~~(1)~~ is adjustable.

16. (Currently amended) The attachment of ~~Claims 12 to 14~~, Claim 14, wherein said locking arrangement ~~(19,20)~~ comprises, mounted on one side of each ~~said~~ jointed pieces ~~(119)~~, a gear wheel ~~(19)~~ and a lockable spring-biased slider ~~(20)~~, said slider being formed with an end jaw ~~(21)~~ adapted ~~to engage~~ engageable with teeth of a gear wheel ~~(19)~~ on the adjacent ~~one of said~~ pieces.

17. (Currently amended) The attachment of ~~any of the preceding Claims~~, Claim 1, for use in a method of correcting abnormal curvatures of the spine.